

the fear may be the anticipation of possible physical or verbal abuse from students. Beginning teachers may wonder how they would cope with extreme behavior in the classroom such as overt profanity, display of drugs and drug abuse, assaults, carrying of weapons, and general outbreaks of violence.

## Student Behavior in the Classroom

An individual or group of students bent on antisocial, violent, or destructive behavior is an ugly and frightening sight to observe. It can be more so for the teacher who is responsible for redirecting the individual or group into constructive learning activities. When a teacher is unsuccessful in doing this, he or she may feel completely powerless and incompetent.

No effective instruction can occur in the midst of a maelstrom. Communication in a classroom out of control is garbled and coated with tension. Students and teacher lack the sense of security and stability that is necessary for effective learning and teaching to transpire.

A number of comprehensive texts exist that address fears and related problems such as these, as well as the general mechanics of classroom management (e.g., Good & Brophy, 1987; Gordon, 1974; Glasser, 1985; Weber, 1990). A full and adequate discussion of the issues they cover is beyond the scope of this text. Because a successfully managed classroom environment is central to all effective social studies instruction, however, the subject merits at least brief attention in our discussion.

Often beginning teachers receive a countless number of well-intentioned suggestions from their more-experienced colleagues on how to be successful in managing a classroom. Those range from maxims such as "Don't smile before Christmas" to lists of specific teacher behaviors to be modeled. The difficulty for the neophyte in trying to implement such suggestions usually is the lack of an underlying framework of principles that can provide a rationale for the teacher's behavior. The absence of such a framework ultimately creates problems when specific behavior that normally is effective proves to be ineffective. At that point a teacher is at a loss as to what went wrong and which adjustments should be made.

One central element of a classroom-management framework is awareness of the teacher's *expectations concerning what is appropriate student behavior in a classroom*. A second basic element is *knowledge of well-grounded theory and research concerning characteristics of well-managed classrooms*. We briefly consider each of these points in turn.

## Teacher Expectations concerning Student Behavior

Good and Brophy (1987) have noted:

To manage classrooms effectively, teachers need both clear expectations about how students should spend their time and knowledge about what to do when their expectations are not being met. Expectations define classroom management goals and guide decisions about creating, maintaining, and restoring desirable student behavior. [p. 216]

Each teacher has some set of expectations regarding how his or her students are to behave in the classroom. Some teachers, for example, will accept a high level of noise and a great deal of student movement within the classroom. Others require students to request permission to speak or move about. Students in the middle and secondary grades often have to make quick adjustments from period to period, from one teacher's set of expectations to another's. At best, these adjustments are often just another challenge that students associate with schooling. At worst, they represent for some students a continuing source of confusion and eventual conflict.

Students themselves have their own sets of expectations about appropriate teacher behavior. Those expectations typically include how they expect the teacher to treat them. They also involve what students expect the teacher to do with respect to managing the general classroom environment, including establishing and maintaining rules and policies and handling behavioral problems.

## Making Rules, Policies, and Procedures Explicit

Apart from the merits of the various alternative arguments that have been advanced concerning what the mutual expectations of teachers and students *should be*, the key issue is for both to openly and explicitly air their views. This should occur at the beginning of the school year.

Because teachers' expectations of student behavior may vary within a given school, it often is helpful to make explicit at the beginning of the year the rules, policies, and procedures students are to follow within a given class. These may cover many different areas, as the list in Figure 10.1 illustrates. This task can be accomplished simply through the prominent display of a chart, brief statements on assignment sheets, or verbal reminders. In all cases the teacher should ensure that all students, even chronic absentees, have been briefed.

	Rules related to classroom conduct	Rules related to academic work
Rules that need to be communicated first day	1. where to sit 2. how seats are assigned 3. what to do before the bell rings 4. responding, speaking out 5. leaving at the bell 6. drinks, food and gum 7. washroom and drinking privileges	8. materials required for class 9. homework completion 10. make-up work 11. incomplete work 12. missed quizzes and examinations 13. determining grades 14. violation of rules
Rules that can be communicated later	15. tardiness/absences 16. coming up to desk 17. when a visitor comes to the door 18. leaving the classroom 19. consequences of rule violation	20. notebook completion 21. obtaining help 22. notetaking 23. sharing work with others 24. use of learning center and/or reference works 25. communication during group work 26. neatness 27. lab safety

FIGURE 10.1. Classroom Rules Related to Conduct and Work. Source: Borich, G. D. *Effective Teaching Methods* (Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1988, p. 234). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

## Characteristics of Well-Managed Classrooms

What do teachers who have well-managed classrooms do to achieve their results? The answers can be complex and varied, depending on the criteria used for successful management, the subject area, and the grade level of the students. Consequently, answers often appear more in the form of hypotheses that have been partially tested than as definitive prescriptions. Much of the evidence, however, suggests that managerial success involves preventing behavioral problems *before* they occur through specific teacher behaviors (Good & Brophy, 1987).

Kounin's work (1970) remains one of the most systematic sets of information available on the subject of classroom management, even though his research was limited to elementary classrooms. He found that it was possible to isolate specific teacher behaviors that appeared to be related to managerial success in the classroom. "These techniques

of classroom management," he wrote, "apply to the group and not merely to individual children. They are techniques of creating an effective classroom ecology and learning milieu. One might note that none of them necessitates punitiveness or restrictiveness" (p. 143-144).

His findings were that teachers who had a *high* degree of work involvement and a *low* degree of misbehavior in their classrooms consistently demonstrated certain behaviors. Some of those were the following:

1. *Withitness*: Communicating that one knows what is going on in the classroom at all times.
2. *Overlapping*: Being able to attend to two issues simultaneously.
3. *Smoothness*: Managing physical movement from one activity to another without jerkiness, distractions, or halts.
4. *Momentum*: Keeping physical activities moving at an appropriate pace.
5. *Group alerting*: Attempting to involve nonparticipating students in discussions.
6. *Accountability*: Holding students responsible for their tasks.
7. *Valence*: Pointing out that an activity has something special about it.
8. *Challenge*: Providing intellectual challenges in work.
9. *Seatwork variety*: Planning varied activities.

In a way that is consistent with their philosophy and beliefs about student behavior and their responsibility to provide a classroom environment that enhances learning for all, teachers must establish and enforce the final guidelines that they feel are most appropriate. At the same time, it is in their best interest to identify and take into account students' views.

## The Community as an Environment for Learning

Beyond the environment of the classroom, every school has a rich environment at its doorstep—the community in which it resides. Probably one of the least-tapped resources for social studies teaching is the wealth of material that generally is available within every community. Local organizations and businesses, for example, often will cooperate with teachers in arranging field trips, guest speakers, information, and assistance.